

Senate Bill 41

By: Senator Smith of the 52nd

AS PASSED

AN ACT

To amend Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state symbols, so as to designate the green tree frog as the official state amphibian; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

The General Assembly finds and determines that:

- (1) The green tree frog's (*Hyla cinerea*) habitat includes nearly all of Georgia, so virtually all Georgians are familiar with it or have a great opportunity to see its conspicuous bright color and striped markings;
- (2) Large aggregations of calling males create conspicuous and characteristic nighttime choruses during the warm months;
- (3) All other major groups of wildlife, including mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, trees, and wildflowers, are represented by state symbols, and amphibians are a crucial link in the state's ecosystem;
- (4) Official recognition of a state amphibian could help correct the false impression that amphibians and reptiles are one and the same;
- (5) The State of Georgia is home to 85 different species of amphibians, which gives it the distinction of having the second greatest amphibian diversity of any state in the United States behind North Carolina;
- (6) Well-publicized world-wide decline of amphibians has become a major conservation concern and the exclusion of amphibians from our official state symbols list could possibly contribute to a sense of complacency towards this loss of biota;
- (7) Amphibians are excellent indicators of water and air quality due to their porous skin and habit of moving between aquatic and terrestrial habitats, and declines in their

numbers can serve as early warning signs that environmental conditions may be deteriorating in localized areas; and

(8) Establishing an official state amphibian is necessary to fully recognize our diverse wildlife and the green tree frog is deserving of the attention and appreciation of the citizens of this state by designation as the official state amphibian.

SECTION 2.

Article 3 of Chapter 3 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to state symbols, is amended by adding a new Code Section 50-3-81 to read as follows:

"50-3-81.

The green tree frog is designated as the official Georgia state amphibian."

SECTION 3.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.